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Tuesday, September 25, 2012

DEATH BY TRAIN: GROWING PROBLEM ALONG THE RAILS

Fatalities on SEPTA system rose 50 percent in '11, trending high again in '12 Nationally, rail casualties also up Suicides often cause {page 04}

sports

QB change? Reid evaluates

With Vick struggling, Eagles coach may consider bringing in Foles {page 25}

travel

Giving Napa the Finger?

The Finger Lakes region is the new place to get wined up Where to drink it in {page 20}

the word

The Mayer of Ladykillerville

Katy Perry's friends warn her that John Mayer will love her and leave her {page 15}

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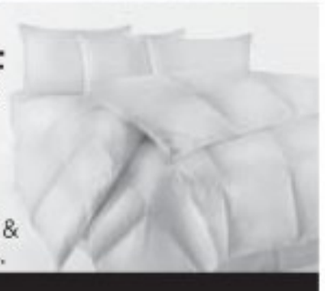

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Troubling rail trend

Deaths by train have been on the rise for the last 18 months along SEPTA's train lines Increase in rail casualties also seen across country during first half of 2012 SEPTA officials have entered prevention mode to raise awareness about dangers of railroad

Two weeks ago, two pedestrians were struck by SEPTA trains within an hour of each other in separate incidents, which was described as a "tragic coincidence" by a spokesperson.

Fortunately, both passengers — a 16-year-old boy and a man in his 20s — survived. To thousands of commuters in the region, the accidents were mere inconveniences that put a wrinkle in their trip home. For SEPTA officials, the day was a startling reminder of one thing: More has to be done to educate the public about the danger of the rails.

"These were the lucky ones — if you want to consider the damage they're going to deal with the rest of their lives lucky," said Jim Fox, SEPTA's director of System Safety and Risk Management. "They'll see another day."

In 2011, SEPTA had 15 pedestrian fatalities on the rails, up from 10 in 2010 and 2009. This year, they have had nine deaths.

While Fox said he does not know the reason for the spike, many of the deaths have been ruled suicides. Out of the 15 deaths last year, eight were confirmed suicides, compared to eight confirmed suicides in the previous two years combined.

"It's not even really just at SEPTA — this is a national issue right now," said Fox, who recently returned from an industry conference on the issue of trespassing. "Everyone's been struggling with the statistics [continuing] to rise, even though there's a tremendous effort on the part of the properties to better educate and partner and talk to riders in the community about the dangers."

SEPTA is concerned enough about the issue that General Manager Joe Casey took to publishing a full-page ad in Metro to remind passengers about the dangers. SEPTA's letter came three months after New Jersey Transit launched an awareness campaign with public service announcements following the deaths of three teenagers in October 2011.

Whether the new emphasis will ultimately change pedestrian behavior remains to be seen, but Fox said SEPTA will keep beating the drum.

SOLOMON D. LEACH
sleach@metro.us

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ SEPTA officials are in the midst of a public awareness campaign to have more people obey the sign to the left.

12.4
Rate of suicides per 100,000 people in the U.S in 2010, according to the CDC. It is the highest rate in 15 years.

15
Total pedestrian deaths on SEPTA's rails in 2011, up from 10 in 2010

16
Number of confirmed suicides committed by pedestrians on SEPTA's rails between 2009 and 2011

SEPTA's three E's of safety

Transit agencies are advised to address system safety with the three Es: education, engineering and enforcement.

Fox said SEPTA has installed fencing, along with audio and visual signals, at many of its Regional Rail stations, but noted that the agency can't fence the entire property, citing cost and the need for access in the event of an emergency.

In terms of enforcement, Fox said it is nearly impossible for the authority's officer to catch up with those caught trespassing. "By the time our engineer sees it and calls it in and they dispatch a police officer, 90 percent of the time the trespasser is gone by then."

SEPTA has also begun a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania to create a map of reported trespassing incidents so that safety officials can identify possible patterns, Fox said.

Eyewitness account of a suicide

It was shortly after midnight on March 14. I was on the final SEPTA train of the night bound for Trenton, sitting in the front car about six rows from the engineer's small driving compartment. It was a sparsely populated train, as they often are that late.

We were on a dark stretch between Cornwell Heights and Croyden where the Regional Rail line can reach around 70 miles per hour.

After a short blast of the train's horn, the train hit something. The engineer yelled in agony. Then he cursed and threw the brakes on. The handful of people in the front train car looked around. We put two-and-two together pretty quickly. Within seconds, a conductor rushed to the engineer's compartment. The train took about half a mile to come to a stop. Looking out the window, you could make out dim light from Interstate 95 off to the west, but otherwise we were shrouded in darkness. Inside the train, a discomfort swallowed us. We'd all just heard a person killed by a speeding train.

Initially, the conductor said it might be awhile as we waited for police and emergency workers to arrive. But a northbound Amtrak train luckily was passing by and slowed to take the 50 SEPTA passengers to the remaining four stops. The conductor later told me it wasn't the first time for the engineer. By the sound of his carnal yell, you apparently never get over something like that.

The man who died, Franklin Huber, 39, was from Bensalem, which is where the train struck him. Cops found a 40-ounce bottle of beer still three-quarters full and a few cigarette butts at the scene. He didn't wait to finish his beer. I don't think I'll forget Mr. Huber's death anytime soon.

BRIAN X. MCCRONE

In the news

Record speeds for Amtrak

Starting last night and continuing into next week, Amtrak is testing out 165-mph trains between Trenton and New Brunswick, N.J., in preparation for its $450 million high-speed rail program, slated for completion by 2017. Officials will measure safety factors and rider quality along the New Jersey route, where trains normally reach a maximum speed of 135 mph. METRO/AW

In the news

Talib Kweli in Philly today

Rock the Vote, a member of the PA Voter ID Coalition, will hold a free concert today from noon to 4 p.m. at the Community College of Philadelphia featuring rapper Talib Kweli and a DJ set by Jeffrey Tonnesen. The event will educate people about the state's new voter ID law and encourage them to register to cast a ballot in November. METRO

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Robbed him, then took bus with victim

PHILADELPHIA. A city man was arrested earlier this month after he allegedly robbed a man at gunpoint at a bus stop and then boarded the bus with the victim.

Philadelphia police said the incident happened Aug. 6 on Roosevelt Boulevard in the city's Hunting Park section. The suspect, later identified as James Robinson, allegedly approached the male victim, pulled out a gun and demanded the victim give up his property. The victim gave Robinson his iPod touch.

Instead of fleeing immediately, Robinson then boarded the bus with his victim, which was nicely captured on the bus' surveillance video. After a few blocks, Robinson got off the bus at Roosevelt Boulevard and Pratt Street.

For his part, Robinson, 21, eluded capture until Sept. 11 when police arrested him. He is charged with robbery, illegal possession of a gun, theft and related charges.

METRO/SDL

City arts sector tops in country for job creation

RICARD LARMA/METRO

▶ About 100,000 visitors have come to the Barnes Museum since it opened May 19, museum spokesman Andrew Stewart said.

Southeastern Pennsylvania's arts and cultural sector has a $3.3 billion yearly impact on the local economy and is the No. 1 region in the country for arts-related job creation, according to a report released by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. The arts also generate $168 million in annual tax revenues — $94 million for the state government and $74 million municipally.

"In many places, culture is viewed as an amenity," president Tom Kaiden said in a statement. "Here in Philadelphia, it's interwoven into the fabric of everything we do. Arts and culture is a vital regional asset that supports thousands of jobs, benefits business in every industry and helps grow our economy."

The report breaks down the $3.3 billion in annual spending by local cultural organizations and audiences into direct expenditures, which total $1.4 billion, and indirect expenditures created as those dollars travel through the economy, generating another $1.9 billion.

The 345 local nonprofit arts and cultural organizations surveyed by the report contribute $875 million each year in direct expenditures, including $290.9 million on salaries.

How we spent

Of the 2,039 patrons surveyed at 78 arts and cultural events, audience members directly contribute $521 million each year to the local economy, spending an average of $30 per person per event in addition to its ticket price. That includes:

- $237.8 million on meals before or after an event
- $84.3 million on overnight lodging
- $65.7 million on ground transportation
- $53.5 million on refreshments during the event
- $46.3 million on souvenirs
- $16.2 million on clothing and accessories
- $4 million on event-related child care

ALEX WIGGLESWORTH
awigglesworth@metro.us

Arts for jobs

Comparing Philadelphia to 181 other regions, the report finds that its cultural sector supports nearly 44,000 full-time jobs each year — about 11 jobs per thousand residents, double the national average — putting the city first in the nation for arts-related job creation.

While 7,600 of those jobs are in the cultural fields themselves, an additional 36,100 are created in other industries but supported by arts and culture spending, such as marketers, accountants, consultants, contractors and hospitality workers.

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News in brief

Bank robber makes pit stop at McDonalds

BUCKS COUNTY. Bensalem police on Friday caught up with a man who allegedly robbed a bank when they say the suspect hailed a cab to a nearby McDonald's.

Maurice Ray, 22, allegedly robbed the Fulton Bank on Street Road shortly before 5 p.m., police said, then fled on foot behind several homes. Police continued to search the area using a K-9 dog from Bristol Township. They said they caught up with Ray, who is homeless, about 40 minutes after the robbery when they noticed a cab arrive at the McDonald's on Street Road.

As officers entered the fast food chain, they saw a man later identified as Ray. Investigators said as police attempted to detain Ray, he threw a chair at them, missing the officers but striking their dog. Ray then allegedly threw a second chair and was subsequently tased. METRO

NJ says: Don't expand gambling

NEW JERSEY. The majority of New Jersey residents are opposed to legalized gambling outside Atlantic City, according to a new poll.

The study, from Fairleigh Dickinson University, showed that residents opposed the expansion of gaming 56 to 35 percent. The results are similar to 2010, when 49 percent of residents objected to the idea, while 42 percent supported it. Residents were a bit more mixed on whether the state should offer tax breaks to Atlantic City developers to stimulate job growth. Forty-one percent said such breaks were appropriate, while 49 percent were against using taxpayer dollars. METRO/SDL

Rittenhouse ranks among nation's most popular parks

Travel + Leisure magazine ranked the nation's 20 most popular city parks, and Rittenhouse Square placed 10th.

The compilation is based on the number of Foursquare check-ins at parks across the country between August 2011 and August 2012. Overall, the magazine found that Foursquare users checking in at green spaces tended to be between the ages of 25 and 34 and that men were slightly more likely to use the social networking app than women.

Home to the most voracious Foursquare users, New York City took the list's top six most popular parks, with Central Park clocking in at No. 1, followed by Union Square Park, Bryant Park, High Line Park, Madison Square Park and Washington Square Park.

The city that never sleeps also houses the 16th and 20th most popular parks: Battery Park and Tompkins Square Park. Combined with the borough of Brooklyn, which has the 13th and 18th most popular parks – Prospect Park and McCarren Park, respectively – New York dominates the list, home to 50 percent of the most popular urban green spaces.

ALEX WIGGLESWORTH
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RICARD LARMA/METRO

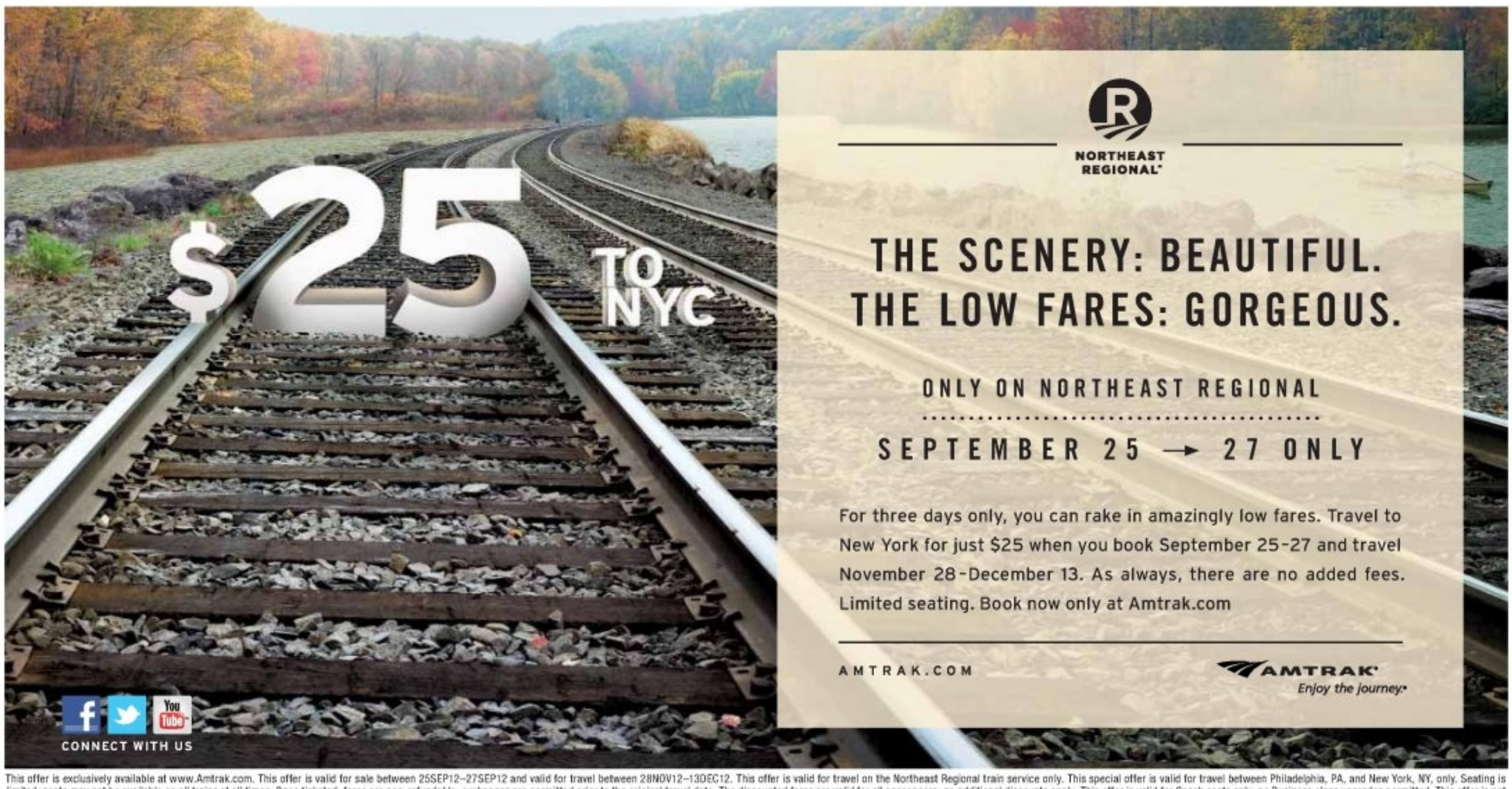
▶ Rittenhouse Square is bustling year-round.

What they say

Of Rittenhouse Square, Travel + Leisure writers said:

"Set in the ritzy Philly neighborhood that shares its name, this seven-acre park is a hub for block parties and festivals (as well as a handful of hotels, which bring crowds and check-ins). On any given day, you'll spot residents hanging with their dogs, artists sketching, and musicians strumming guitars."

"Don't Miss: The Rittenhouse Square Flower Market, an annual two-day festival held each May, the oldest continuous event in the space."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US tells UN: Free speech protects religious dignity

The United States told a UN human rights body yesterday it considered freedom of religion inseparable from free expression, countering calls from many Islamic countries for a treaty outlawing blasphemy.

After two weeks of protests around the Muslim world, Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe told the UN Human Rights Council that religious dignity is best protected where there is free speech.

Donahoe said that when the two freedoms were allowed to flourish, "we see religious harmony, economic prosperity, societal innovation and progress, and citizens who feel their dignity is respected."

Last week, the 56-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation signaled it wanted an international ban on blasphemy, echoing calls from many Islamic clerics and some government leaders adter the film. REUTERS

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe

Quoted: Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe

"When these freedoms are restricted, we see violence, poverty, stagnation and feelings of frustration and even humiliation."

"The inseparable freedoms of expression and religion are important not for abstract reasons."

In the news

SAT reading, writing test scores drop to lowest levels

Average reading and writing SAT scores for high school students declined to their lowest levels while math results stalled.

For the class of 2012, the average critical reading score fell 1 point to 496 from a year earlier, the lowest since data became available in 1972, according to a report released by the New York-based College Board, which administers the test. The average score for writing dropped 1 point to 488, the lowest since writing was added to the exam in 2006. Math results were unchanged at 514. Scores can range from 200 to 800.

A record 1.66 million from the class of 2012 took the exam. BLOOMBERG

Metro Photo Challenge

▶ Today's winner: Brian Cummings, "My Night"

Visit **www.metrophotochallenge.com** to submit your best photos to the world's largest photo competition and have the chance of getting published!

News in brief

Marines face charges over urination video

WASHINGTON. Two Marines are facing criminal charges for urinating on the bodies of dead Taliban fighters in Afghanistan, actions caught on a video that was widely circulated on the Internet.

The criminal charges are the first faced by anyone over the incident. The video triggered widespread anger in Afghanistan early this year, with Afghan President Hamid Karzai calling the Marines' actions "inhuman."

Staff Sergeants Joseph W. Chamblin and Edward W. Deptola were also charged with "posing for unofficial photographs with human casualties," the Marine Corps said. REUTERS

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News in brief

Feds to fund another solar co.

A tiny solar company named SoloPower will flip the switch on production at a U.S. factory Thursday, a major step toward allowing it to tap a $197 million government loan guarantee awarded under the same controversial program that supported failed panel maker Solyndra.

SoloPower has initiated a strategy to differentiate it from struggling commodity players in the solar panel industry. Still, there are several similarities between SoloPower and Solyndra — which became a lightning rod in the U.S. presidential campaign this year after taking in more than $500 million in government loans and then filing for bankruptcy. **REUTERS**

10M Hispanics could be prevented from voting

New voting laws in 23 of the 50 states could keep more than 10 million Hispanic U.S. citizens from registering and voting, a new study said on Sunday, a number so large it could affect the outcome of the Nov. 6 election.

The Latino community accounts for more than 10 percent of eligible voters nationally. But the share in some states is high enough that keeping Hispanic voters away from the polls could shift some hard-fought states from support for Democratic President Barack Obama and help his Republican rival, Mitt Romney.

The new laws include purges of people suspected of not being citizens in 16 states that unfairly target Latinos, the civil rights group Advancement Project said in the study to be formally released on Monday. **REUTERS**

Gingrich backing for Todd Akin

Former Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich broke with national party leaders and endorsed Missouri Senate candidate Todd Akin, saying other Republicans must "in good conscience" do the same. Appearing at an Akin campaign event yesterday in Kirkwood, a St. Louis suburb, Gingrich said Republicans across the country should consider that a victory by Akin "is a key to winning control of the Senate." Akin, a Republican U.S. congressman, is trying to unseat Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill.

Republicans, including presidential nominee Mitt Romney, called on Akin to leave the race after he said in an Aug. 19 television interview that "legitimate rape" rarely results in pregnancy. **BLOOMBERG**

For Romney, troubling signs among older voters

Even before his running mate was booed by a lobbying group for older Americans on Friday, Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney was losing support among such voters, whose backing is crucial to his hopes of winning the Nov. 6 election.

New polling by Reuters/Ipsos indicates that during the past two weeks —since just after the Democratic National Convention — support for Romney among Americans age 60 and older has crumbled, from a 20-point lead over Democratic President Barack Obama to less than 4 points.

Romney's double-digit advantages among older voters on the issues of health care and Medicare — the nation's health insurance program for those over 65 and the disabled — also have evaporated, and Obama has begun to build an advantage in both areas.

Voting preferences among seniors could change in the final six weeks of the campaign, but the polling suggests that a series of recent episodes favoring Obama and the Democrats could be chipping away at Romney's support among older Americans.

Romney's selection of Wisconsin congressman Paul Ryan as his vice presidential running mate put the federal budget and Medicare at center stage in the campaign. But the debate over spending and entitlement programs that Romney seemed to be seeking has not unfolded the way Republicans wanted.

At the Democratic convention in Charlotte, N.C., on Sept. 5, former President Bill Clinton gave a folksy but blistering critique of Ryan's plan to revamp Medicare, warning that it could leave seniors unprotected from escalating healthcare costs.

Meanwhile, Democrats' efforts to portray Romney as a wealthy former private equity executive with little sympathy for the less fortunate got a boost last week from Romney himself.

On a secretly recorded video released by the liberal magazine Mother Jones, Romney was shown telling supporters at an expensive fundraiser that 47 percent of Americans would never vote for him because they do not pay federal income taxes, feel they are "victims," and depend on government benefits.

Democrats accused Romney of dismissing a range of Americans.

Romney's campaign rejected that, but the recent polls suggest that such claims may be resonating with older Americans, who for months had been the only age group to consistently support Romney over Obama. **REUTERS**

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

▶ U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., greets people during a campaign stop. Ryan's proposed plans for Medicare have many seniors worried about their entitlements.

4 Romney has a four-point lead over Obama with older voters. The Republican presidential candidate formerly had a 20-point lead over his rival.

41 Romney has 41 days before the Nov. 6 election to woo back older voters after alienating many over the course of the entitlement debate.

Quoted

"If Romney loses seniors, he loses this election, period. A bad showing nationally does not bode well for Florida and other states with big senior populations."

JONATHAN OBERLANDER, HEALTH POLICY SPECIALIST WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Metropolitik

MICHAEL J. FROSCH
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT FOR METRO

IN BLIND INVESTING WE TRUST?

Mitt Romney's 2011 tax returns, released last Friday, have revealed investments in a Chinese oil company and bank, as well as investments that profit from the decline of the U.S. dollar, along with the typical tax avoidance mechanisms in the Cayman Islands and Switzerland.

I don't have a problem with these investments. Mitt Romney has been a private citizen since 2006, and until he holds public office, he should be able to invest his money however he pleases. Nor do I think it's un-American of Romney to bet on the decline of the dollar — that can be an effective way to hedge against losses on investments that do rely on a strong dollar.

The problem is that, rather than take responsibility for those investments and explain why he made them, Romney has chosen to lie and pretend that he had nothing to do with them.

Romney insists that all of his investments are made by a "blind trust." Romney appoints a trustee and gives him total control over all investment decisions. Romney isn't allowed to influence those decisions, and can't even know what the trustee invests in. This is supposed to eliminate conflicts of interest, and it allows Romney to say he had nothing to do with those investments in China and those bets against the dollar – it was in a blind trust, for goodness' sake!

Quoted

The problem is that, rather than take responsibility for those investments and explain why he made them, Romney has chosen to lie and pretend he had nothing to do with them.

But Romney's trust is far from blind. Instead of appointing a truly independent trustee, Romney appointed his own family attorney. This arrangement falls outside the Office of Government Ethics' definition of a blind trust, and for good reason — Romney could simply tell his own attorney how to invest, knowing that those instructions were protected by attorney-client privilege. It should come as no surprise that Romney's blind trust invested $10 million in his son Tagg's private equity startup — surely Romney had no influence over that investment decision! Romney himself had sneered at the idea of a blind trust when campaigning against Ted Kennedy, calling it "an age-old ruse" and adding that "you can always tell the blind trust what it can and cannot do."

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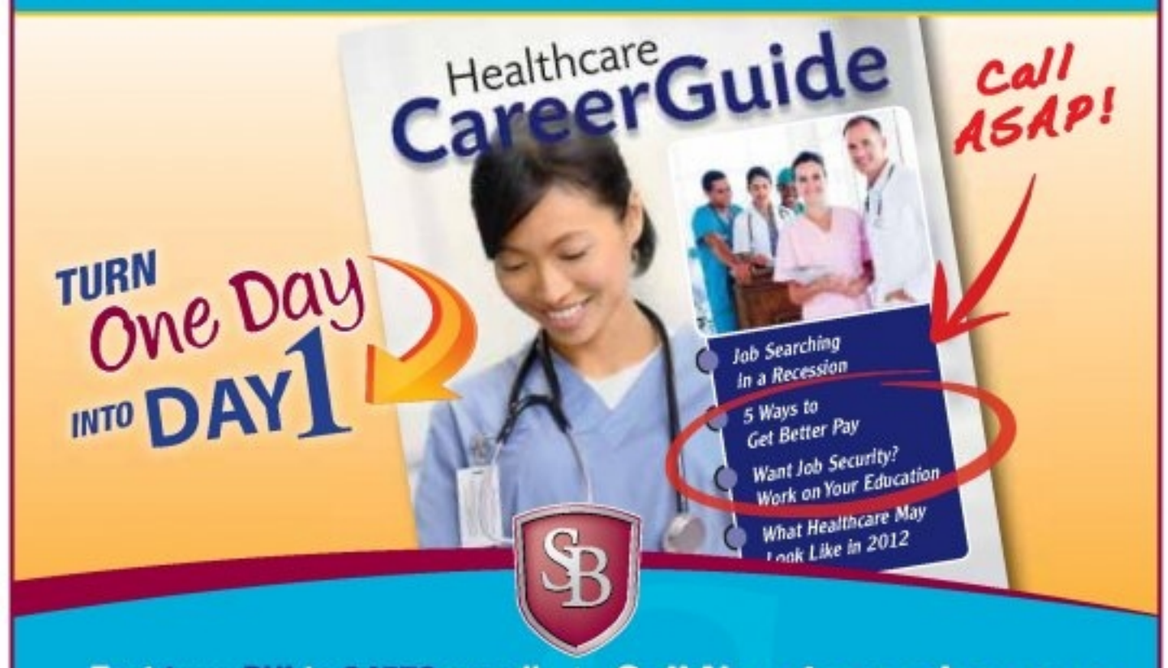

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Education in brief

Campus Philly welcome party

▶ Tanlines will play the Campus Philly party on Saturday.

GETTY IMAGES

Campus Philly (**www.campusphilly.org**) is sponsoring a welcome-back party for Philadelphia-area college students on the Ben Franklin Parkway this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Most of the activity will be on the Parkway, with live music, an art village and food trucks. In addition, a dozen museums will offer free admission to those with a valid student ID. These museums include some elsewhere in the city, like Eastern State Penitentiary and several in the historic district — there will be a free trolley traveling between these sites.

Love Park, at the foot of the Parkway, will have its own Fall Fest the same day starting at 1 p.m., with live bands, a fashion show and vendors.

Temple University hits the wall

Traffic passing Temple University's Pearson/McGonigle complex on Broad Street may do a double-take when they see people climbing a 28-foot rock wall in the building's glass-fronted atrium. The wall offers a variety of climbing challenges appropriate to everyone from complete beginners to experts. Lessons and climbing gear are available to Temple students, faculty and staff.

New partnership makes med school more accessible

A new partnership between Penn State Brandywine and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine will make it easier for nontraditional students to become physicians. In Brandywine's postbaccalaureate medical sciences certificate program, college graduates who have degrees in non-medical fields can pick up the prerequisites needed for medical schools. The program is designed for working adults, with a combination of online coursework and weekend lab sessions. **JUDY WEIGHTMAN**

UArts grad sculpted otherworldly career

Frank Hartman took an unusual route to his position at NASA, where he works on the Mars rover

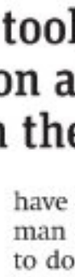
One member of the team "driving" the Curiosity rover across the surface of Mars has a BFA in sculpture from the University of the Arts. Frank Hartman helps program the rover's movements at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

Because of the 14-minute delay while signals travel the 154 million miles between Earth and Mars, the operators can't move the rover in real time — it could drive off a cliff before the drivers on Earth even realized there was a cliff. Instead, the team spends the rover's downtime during each Martian night analyzing the day's images and data and programing the entire next day's activity.

Hartman says his background as an artist is part of what he brings to the table. "All the rover drivers and planners have different strengths," Hartman says. "One thing I'm able to do is interpret three-dimensionally what I'm seeing in these 2-D images." He attributes that to studying sculpture at UArts.

Hartman started studying computer animation when it was a brand-new field 20 years ago. Through a friend of a friend, he heard about a job in JPL's animation lab. While there, he wrote a video game simulating the actions of Mars explorers. This led to his joining the team that operated Pathfinder, the first Mars mission. He also worked on the Spirit and Opportunity rovers before Curiosity was launched.

"Some days I can't believe people pay me to do this," he says. "I'm very lucky."



JUDY WEIGHTMAN
letters@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Frank Hartman helps program the movements of the rover, seen here at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

Education résumé

Hartman, who graduated in 1992, started college at Drexel University, studying electrical engineering. Feeling frustrated and wanting a broader education, he transferred to the Philadelphia College of Art (as UArts was then known). As an art student, he combined his two interests — he designed kinetic sculptures with motors and lights.

Hartman also has a master's degree in electrical engineering from Stanford.

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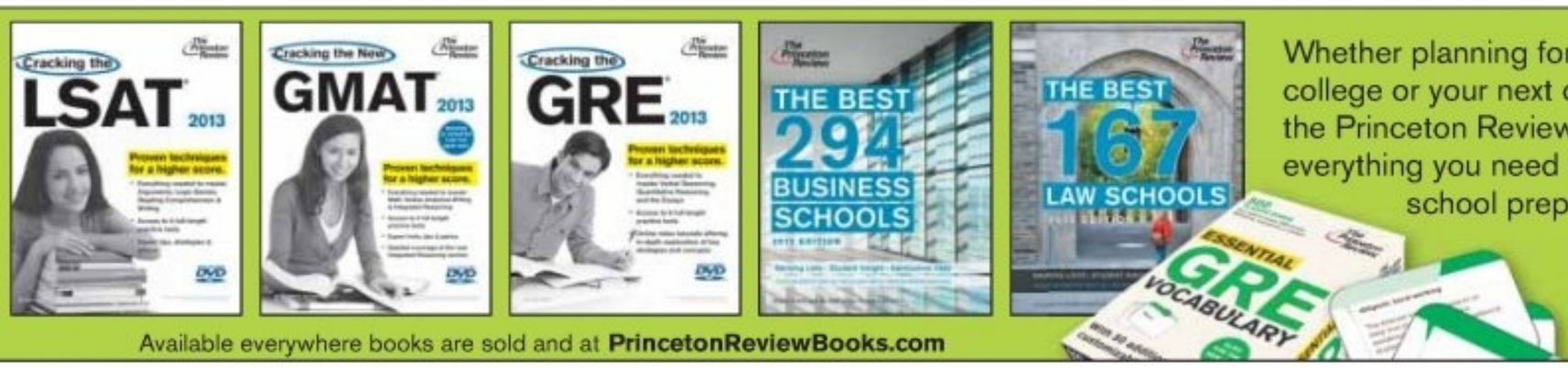
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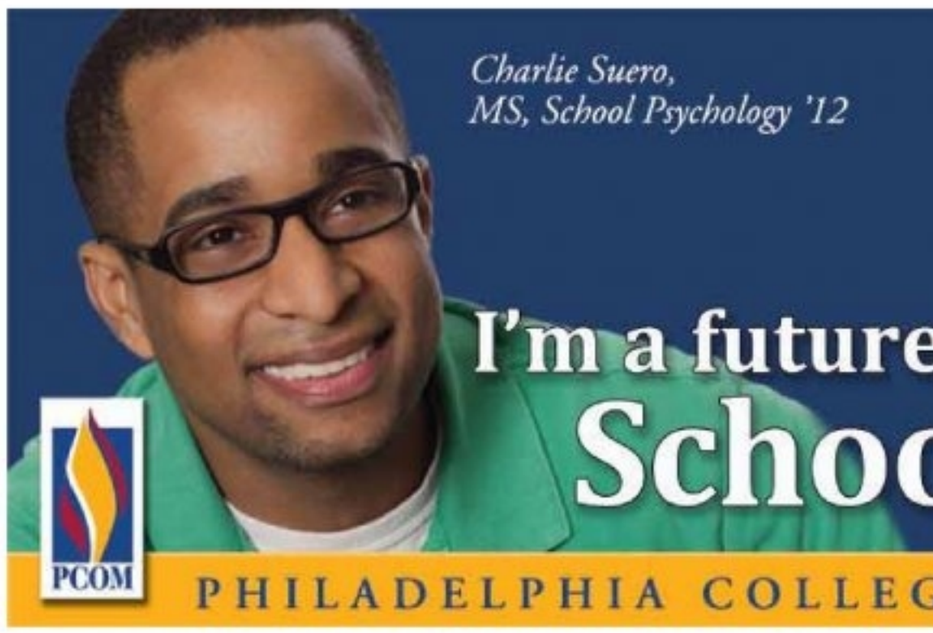

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Temple University turning the tables on energy use

New picnic tables on campus also act as solar panels Students can charge their gadgets between classes, while leftover energy fuels LED lighting

Three new picnic tables have been installed at Temple University to help the school meet its goal of reducing energy consumption by 25 percent within the next two years.

Each Solar Dok table is shaded by a striped umbrella topped with solar panels. The panels provide continuous power to four standard electric outlets on the umbrella's support pole; each pole also has two USB outlets. The panels provide enough power to recharge people's phones, tablets, laptops and other gadgets. They also store power that is used to provide LED lighting in the evening.

The Office of Sustainability considers education a vital component of the university's efforts to reduce energy usage. Temple's sustainability coordinator, Kathleen Grady, says the tables can play a role in that educational effort, since each has a meter that shows how much power the unit is generating.

"Unlike solar panels that are on roofs of buildings, these stations allow students to get up close and personal with solar because they are at a human scale," says Grady. "This project is a great tool because it helps us understand both the advantages and limitations of solar technology."

1,200
Number of recycled milk jugs used to make each new picnic table

25
Percentage that Temple hopes to reduce its energy consumption by over the next two years

JUDY WEIGHTMAN
letters@metro.us

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

▶ Temple is the first university in Pennsylvania to install these tables, according to the manufacturer, EnerFusion, Inc.

Making the military's list

Several schools in the region have been named to the latest list of military-friendly schools. These institutions provide an exceptional level of services and programs targeted to current and former members of the U.S. military.

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Exit exams get a failing grade

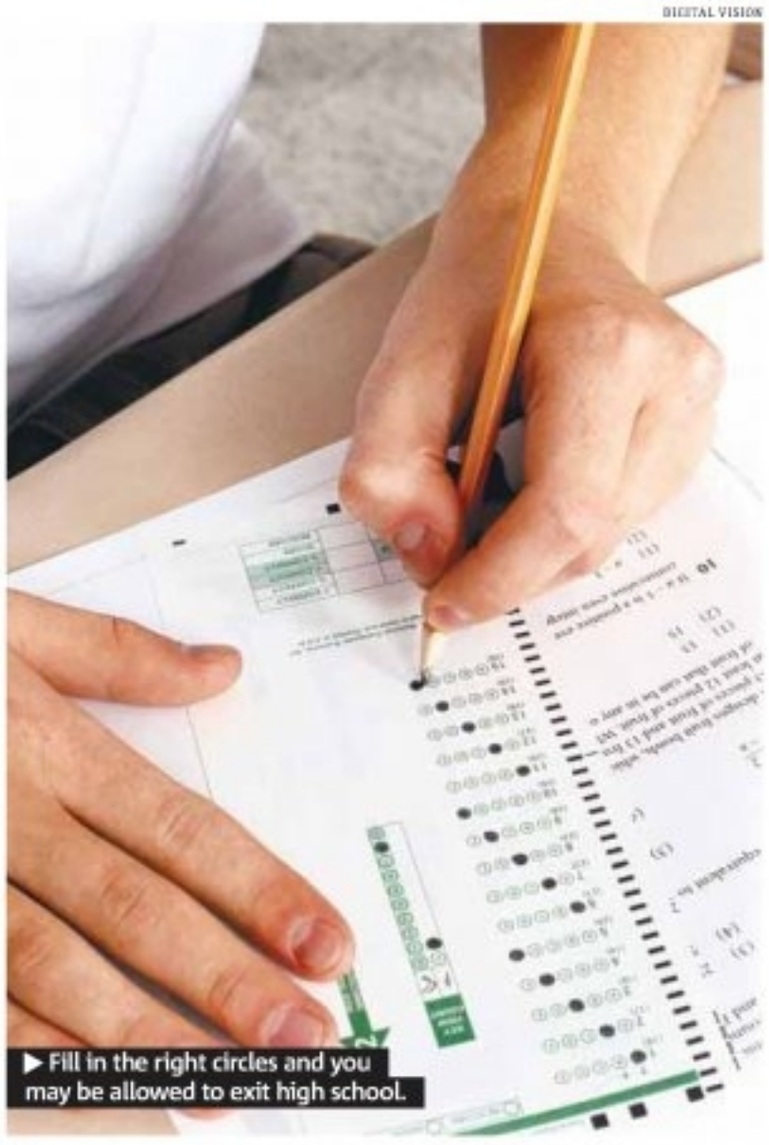
- New Center for Education Policy study questions increasingly difficult standardized tests for high schoolers
- Doubts linger about college prep

Demographics

The CEP also found that exit exams disproportionately affect low-income students.

"These policies tend to be more common in states that have higher populations of students that historically struggle more in school. About 7 in 10 students, nationally, are impacted by exit exams. But it's more like 83 percent for English language learners," says McIntosh. "States have historically struggled to find the extra support that those students need. So, going forward, if the bar is raised even further, what kinds of support do states have planned?"

DIGITAL VISION



▶ Fill in the right circles and you may be allowed to exit high school.

Last week, the Center for Education Policy, a subsidiary of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., released its latest study on high school exit exams. To put the findings bluntly, the tests are getting harder.

A total of 25 states currently require seniors to pass a comprehensive exit exam before graduation. Of those, eight say their tests align with the Common Core State Standards, a higher exit exam level than any state has enacted previously. (The CCSS is a set of college-ready testing benchmarks, recently developed in part by the National Governors Association.) Ten more states say they plan to base their tests on the CCSS in the near future.

But, after more than a decade of studying exit exams, the Center for Education Policy still can't say whether they actually help students become better prepared for college.

"It's a huge question mark at this point," says Shelby McIntosh, who led the study for the CEP. "So, I think it's important to ask ourselves: What is being sacrificed in order to do this testing? For me, I know this kind of testing is very expensive, so the question isn't, 'Are students tested too much?' A better question is, 'Are states spending too much money in these areas, when they could be investing in something more beneficial to students?'"

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THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

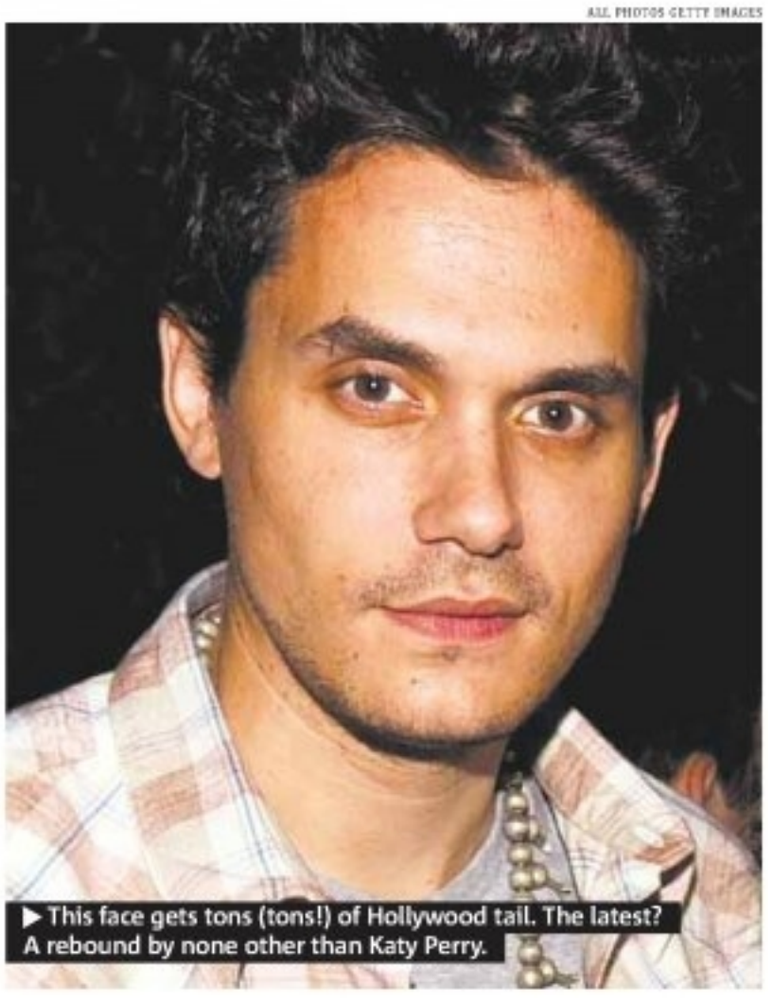
How does John Mayer do it?

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

John Mayer's little black book reads like a who's who of GQ magazine covers: There's **Jennifer Love Hewitt**, **Jessica Simpson**, **Jennifer Aniston**, **Minka Kelly**, **Taylor Swift** and, most recently, new divorcee **Katy Perry**.

But Perry's friends are worried about the singer due to Mayer's lady-killer reputation, according to Radar Online. Sources say her pals are urging her to end it with Mayer before she gets too attached. "Katy's friends and family haven't taken to John at all. In fact, they are worried that she is headed for heartbreak," a source says. "Despite the fiery image Katy likes to present, she's actually more fragile than that, and when John dumped her a few weeks after they first got together she was devastated. Now she ... has let her guard down, and there's only one way this can end — in disaster."

Disaster — or an eventual song about Mayer and his heartbreaking ways. Or, depending on how you feel about Katy Perry's singing, it could be both.



▶ This face gets tons (tons!) of Hollywood tail. The latest? A rebound by none other than Katy Perry.

Kanye West proves his stamina

It looks like there could be some truth to the rumors of a **Kanye West** sex tape — or two tapes, even — now that lawyers for the rapper have sent out a cease-and-desist letter to multiple media outlets demanding they take down posts featuring a screen shot allegedly taken from the video, according to AllHipHop.com. "Be advised that the screen shot, as well as the tape from which the screen shot was taken, were illegally obtained," West's attorney writes in the letter. "Both tapes are impressively long," sources tell the website. "The second is more than 40 [minutes]."

Forty minutes! What stamina! But here's my question: Do you think West made these sex tapes so he would have something in common with his new girlfriend, **Kim Kardashian**? Ah, the things we do for love.

▶ Kim and Kanye

Body. double

▶ Our favorite Gaga gingerbread

Lady Gaga has figured out the best way to make sure the media won't discuss her weight: Wear a body-hiding outfit. Here is the star leaving the Park Hyatt Paris hotel on Saturday looking like something out of "Willy Wonka."

Talking points

Holmes is moving on (via telephone)

So what's one of the first things **Katie Holmes** did after splitting with husband **Tom Cruise**? Reconnect with old friends. Former "Dawson's Creek" co-star **Joshua Jackson** confirms that he recently heard from Holmes, he says in an interview on Canada's "George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight." Jackson, who was rumored to be linked romantically to Holmes years ago, says they had a "very nice" chat. "Like any old friend, it was like, 'Oh hi, how are you? What's going on?' 'I had a kid,'" he says. "It was very nice, actually."

Armstrong heads to rehab

Green Day frontman **Billie Joe Armstrong** stunned a Las Vegas audience over the weekend with a guitar-smashing outburst after being told to wrap up his band's set. Instead, he flew into a rage, smashed his guitar, yelled at the audience and stormed off the stage. Now, it turns out it wasn't just a simple tantrum, as Armstrong is headed to rehab. "Armstrong is seeking treatment for substance abuse," the band's rep said in a statement Sunday. "Green Day would like everyone to know that their set was not cut short by Clear Channel and to apologize to those they offended."

Cooper and Saldana: Cuddle alert

Bradley Cooper and **Zoe Saldana** are fueling suspicion once again that they're more than just friends. The pair looked quite cozy after taking in a movie together in Los Angeles over the weekend, according to People magazine. Cooper and Saldana first sparked romance rumors while filming the recent movie "The Words."

The feed ...

▶ **Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.**

Today, Joel McHale has had enough of the heatwave, Sofia Vergara knows how to get down, Kelly Osbourne has a pretty hectic work schedule and Albert Brooks is bragging.

@joelmchale
Dear Sun, We get it. You're awesome and powerful. Please stop. Love, Los Angeles.

@SofiaVergara
I party Like a mermaid!

@MissKellyO
Although Im working 14 hour days while I am here I bloody love being home!

@AlbertBrooks
I just thought of the world's funniest tweet.

Vergara

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Our favorite celebrity Emmy couples

1. They aren't a couple in the romantic sense, but you can't blame us for wishing for it were true: **Louis C.K.** and **Amy Poehler** presented the award together for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series at Sunday night's Emmys.

2. Bart Freundlich and wife, Emmy winner **Julianne Moore,** partied at HBO's famed annual Emmy Awards after-party.

3. Judd Apatow and wife **Leslie Mann** also popped up at the HBO party.

4. Ashlee Simpson and new beau **Vincent Piazza** also attended HBO's party.

5. Wherever **Christina Hendricks** goes, her giant, exposed cha-chas are sure to follow. Here is the happy couple at the Emmy Awards Governors Ball.

1: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE
2,3,5: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES
4: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

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Living in a romantic comedy

Mindy Kaling proved herself a likable dreamer with her best-selling collection of memoir-like humor essays, "Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (And Other Concerns)," along with her role as the ditzy romantic Kelly on "The Office." She brings her unapologetic take on the modern young woman to Fox as creator and star of "The Mindy Project," following a dedicated OB-GYN (Kaling) who is way more successful in the operating room than the bedroom. We sat down with Kaling and focused on the positives — like getting her own show.

Mindy Kaling

True story

"You know that saying: 'Write what you know,'" Kaling says. "Every level of that is [exemplified] in the pilot: What is it like to love romance? What's it like to be a professional after being a nerd growing up? I've been working on [this sitcom] since I was a kid because it's my life in so many ways."

Why the "great at her job, terrible at love" device isn't cliche ...

"The thing that I learned from 'The Office' is [storytelling is about] execution. I want to see two people fall in love; I want to see two people learn how to be better people. It's old-fashioned, but I feel like that's the kind of stories that people want to see, and they want it so badly, they'll even see it when it's terrible," Kaling says.

"How to balance work and personal life, that's the single biggest issue that my friends talk about," she adds. "Somebody might think it's cliche; then my life is a cliche."

... and neither is setting up a potential love interest right from the start.

Chris Messina plays Mindy's coworker and complete opposite — but it's not hard to see where sparks might one day fly between the two. I wanted to [set up] people who are different from each other," Kaling says. "[Chris' character] doesn't believe in marriage; he's kind of cynical — it's fun to do that kind of storytelling. Plus, I love looking at him. Maybe that's sexist."

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books&entertainment

See ya later, fellas

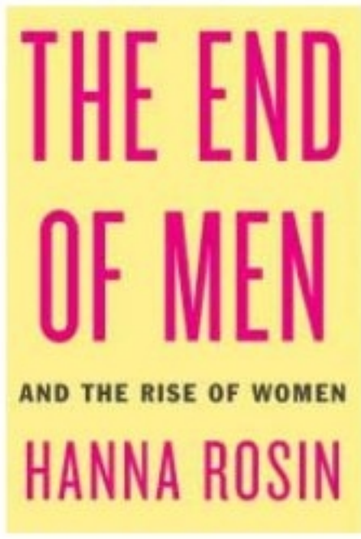
In her provocative new book, 'The End of Men,' journalist Hanna Rosin assesses the rise of women and the decline of men post-recession

Men are on notice.

In journalist Hanna Rosin's new book, "The End of Men: And the Rise of Women," she crisply details how recent gender dynamics in the U.S. have almost been switched — most likely unwittingly. The book was built on new, frightening economic statistics as well as Rosen's interviews, from college students intent on only "hooking up" to spouses boasting decades of marriage, and details how male-female chemistry has changed irrevocably since the recession.

"I was surprised at how radically marriage patterns had changed and how clearly they changed," Rosin said of her research.

"The End of Men" shows how the paychecks of many men will never recover. The jobs men lost during the recession are not rebounding — many are in shuttered factories, leaving men with decades of obsolete experience unable to provide. Meanwhile, as women inch up the ladder, fighting for careers, many emerge as the often-unintended heads of their households.



The reach of this new spousal structure — "seesaw marriages" for the give-and-take of interchanging jobs — is not limited to marriage. Even on campus, women are adamant they will not settle, either for a man lacking the credentials they want or a partner at the wrong time. Getting into a serious relationship is the new accidental pregnancy.

Rosin said this came to mind when her daughter read "Pride and Prejudice." "If Lizzy Bennet were alive today, the real threat to her would be a very serious suitor who would derail her from writing. That's a dangerous thing — the way getting pregnant used to be."

NINA SUBIN

▶ Hanna Rosin

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TV watch list

JENNIFER CLASEN/FOX

▶ Dakota Johnson and Nat Faxon star as total opposite siblings on "Ben and Kate."

'Ben and Kate'

COMEDY. A single mom (Dakota Johnson) who's unlucky in love and her aimless brother (Nat Faxon), who gets by on his charm, raise the former's 5-year-old, with the help of the requisite goofy sitcom sidekicks rounding out the unconventional parenting party. **Series premiere, 8:30 p.m., Fox**

'Vegas'

DRAMA. Dennis Quaid is all business as grizzled rancher-turned-sheriff Ralph Lamb — based on a real guy — who plans to bring law and order back to the desert once the mafia moves into 1960s Las Vegas to run the casinos. Michael Chiklis stars as his mobster nemesis. **Series premiere, 10 p.m., CBS**

'Brickleberry'

COMEDY. Daniel Tosh's unfiltered humored is translated into this animated series (the comedian serves as executive producer), which follows fumbling rangers attempting to bring tourism to Brickleberry National Park. How the jokes about AIDS and the Ku Klux Klan will help is anyone's guess. **Series premiere, 10:30 p.m., Comedy Central**

'Go On'

COMEDY. The NHL lockout be damned, hockey is back on TV — well, sort of. Former star Jeremy Roenick asks Ryan (Matthew Perry) to lace up his skates and join him on the ice. Sure, it may be a pity invite on the pro's part, but for hockey-starved viewers, we'll take it. **9 p.m., NBC** AMBER RAY

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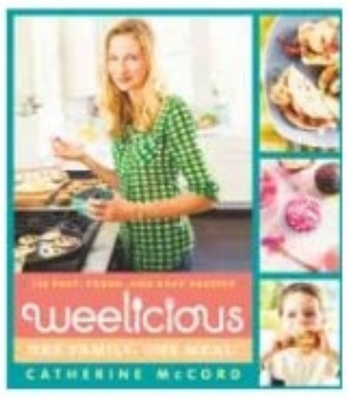
Introduce kids to healthy eating habits

Getting your children to eat the food you make them is difficult — making them be enthusiastic about healthy eating is even harder. Catherine McCord, author of the popular blog Weelicious.com and now the new cookbook "Weelicious: 140 Fast, Fresh, and Easy Recipes," feels your pain. The good news is there's a solution: McCord says that if you give your children a choice, make food fun and involve them in the process, they'll be eating well in no time.

1 Change the presentation, change their attitude
The key is to make all food, whether it's a slice of chocolate cake or a salad, seem exciting to your kids. "Parents should offer kids an array of different foods, with bright colors and interesting textures. I always say if it's on a stick, if it's in a pancake, if it's in a muffin — kids will eat it," claims McCord.



2 Involve them in the process
McCord pushes for children to get a little bit of independence in the kitchen. "Every meal involves my kids, even if it's just the smallest task of pulling the ends off beans. [The fact] they've helped you cook the meal — remind them of that."

3 Kids can shop, too
If you give your children a task and ask them for help while in the grocery store, shopping can remain civil. "Say: 'Let's pick out a fruit and vegetable. You get to pick anything you want. What are we going to make with it?' You've given them this big idea and now they're looking, they're asking questions — and it will keep them busy."

Quoted

"If your child doesn't eat something green today, hopefully they'll eat two green things tomorrow."
CATHERINE MCCORD

4 Give them choices (just not too many)
"I think it's more of an attitude," McCord notes. "If you say you have to [eat a certain thing], I guarantee your child will say 'I will not.' Give them a choice: 'Do you want to grate the carrots or should we steam them?' You're never going to win by forcing your child to do something."

▶ Weelicious.com founder Catherine McCord

5 Give it time
McCord suggests introducing healthy habits from day one, but don't stress if some things aren't an overnight success. "If your child doesn't eat something green today, hopefully they'll eat two green things tomorrow."

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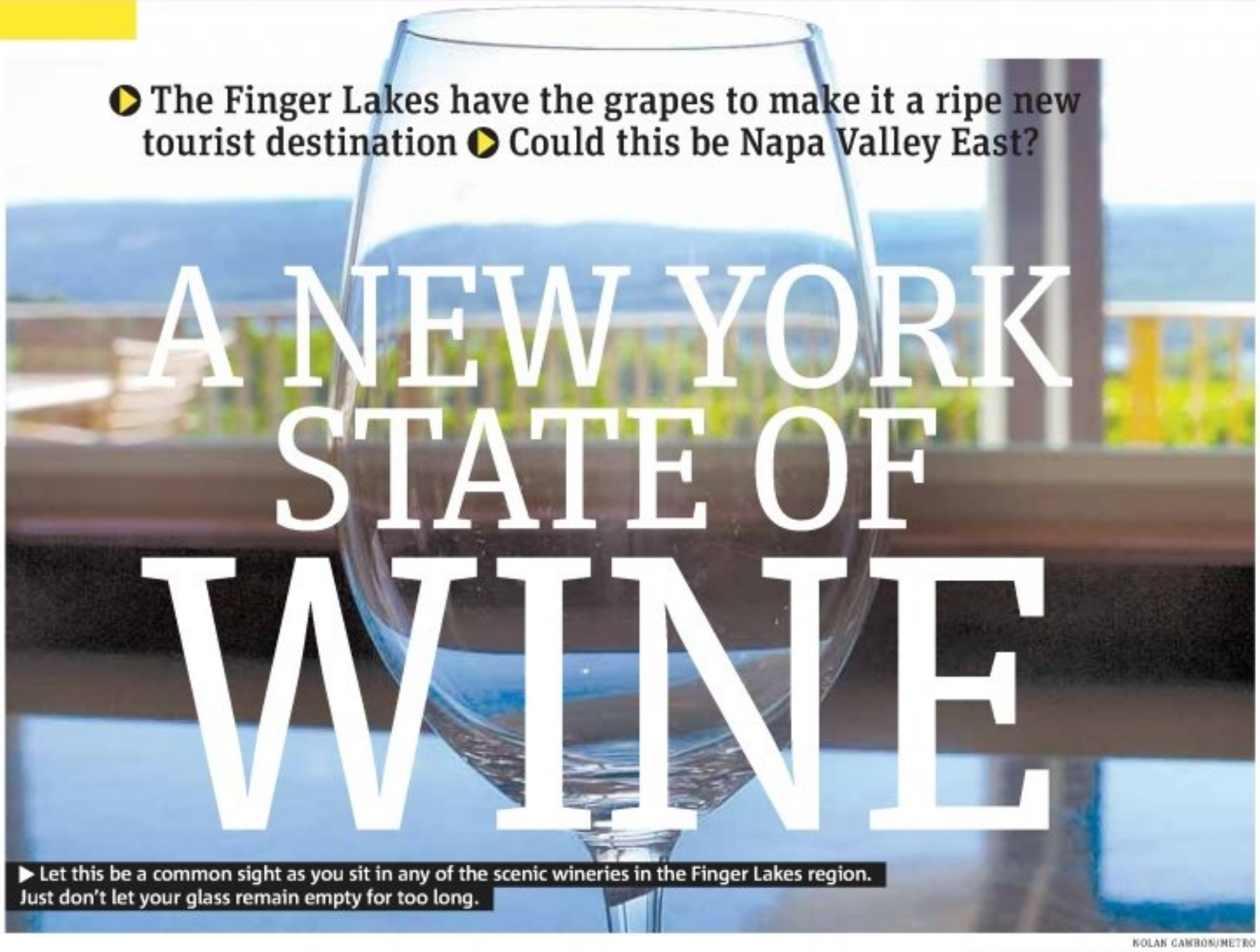

▶ Let this be a common sight as you sit in any of the scenic wineries in the Finger Lakes region. Just don't let your glass remain empty for too long.

NOLAN GAWRON/METRO

In the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, there's a growing excitement, literally. Grapes! Wine grapes, to be more specific. The sloping hillsides, lake breezes and a steady summer sun have always provided the picturesque Finger Lakes region with a healthy grape-growing climate. But until recently, the land was primarily used to grow local Concord grapes that were sold to juice companies.

In recent years, younger generations have taken over the family farms and begun experimenting with wine grape varietals. While the yield can be more profitable, the arduous and artistic process is all the more intensive and comes with a higher risk factor. But with continued growth and a respected product that has gained praise and earned prizes all over the world, the shift seems to be working. Now with 109 wineries, the Finger Lakes have helped make New York the third largest wine producer in America.

Even though the area is known for its cabernet francs, chardonnays, pinot noirs and ice wines, it's riesling that reigns supreme. With a climate similar to its German origins, the varietal has found a second home here. Ranging from dry to sweet and anywhere in between, each vineyard in the area produces at least one style of Riesling — some make several — and many have won worldwide Gold Medal honors.

Camaraderie over competition

With a wine trail marked by road signs, vineyard tours and tasting rooms, tourism in the Finger Lakes is increasing. And with several wineries adding inns and high-end restaurants to their properties, many are calling the Finger Lakes the next Napa Valley. Vineyard owners in the area, however, are quick to point out a monumental difference — a unified sense of community. Here it's camaraderie, not competition, since in this region the vineyard owner is often the farmer, the marketer, the salesman and sometimes even the deliveryman.

"If someone needs a forklift, we let them borrow ours," says Ted Marks, proprietor of Atwater Vineyards. "And they would do the same for us. People come from all over the world to work here and can't believe that we want to help each other succeed. We do what we do well. And we do it without pretension."

A Frank history of the area

DR. FRANK VINIFERA WINE CELLARS

▶ Dr. Konstantin Frank

The very existence and continual growth of vineyards in New York state can all be attributed back to the bold and successful experiments of Dr. Konstantin Frank. Emigrating from the Ukraine to avoid Stalinism in 1951, Frank revolutionized sustainable growing methods for vinifera (vines imported from Europe) in the 1950s and proved that the region's crops could not only survive the extreme winters, but could also produce a world-class wine year after year. Opening Dr. Frank Vinifera Wine Cellars in 1962, the family-run business is celebrating its 50th anniversary and is heralded as New York state's most award-winning winery.

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Letters

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There's (maybe) a time and a place — this isn't it

I find it appalling for the U.N. to have Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speak on Yom Kippur. This is the highest holy day in the Jewish religion. This man hates the Jewish people and vows the destruction of Israel. I am a believer in free speech — we even allow the KKK to publicly have their hateful say. But to allow this man his say on this day is beyond disgusting.

NATALIE KASDAY, VIA E-MAIL

Who's afraid of a little inflation?

RE: "CERTAIN IN LIFE: DEBT AND TAXES" (METRO, SEPT. 24) In his news column, Conn Carroll makes the statement: "Unfortunately, the federal government can't afford all the promises it has made." I beg to differ. This federal government can afford any promise it makes. This sovereign nation can, like any sovereign nation, print as much money as it needs for all the convenient exchanges of goods and services the populace demands. Conn, that means all the entitlements too! All that we really need to fix the debt problem is to issue more money rather than borrow it. See the video, "The Secret of OZ," by Bill Still! Congress can become fiscally responsible once it regains the education and training on the real nature of money — it's just accounting! You and I have been conned into believing that debt and taxes are certain in life because we have an unnatural concept of money. Believe it's opposite and watch your life change!

DAVID SNIECKUS, VIA E-MAIL

The US's wealth's been redistributed — to the rich guys

RE: "SATURDAY'S CHILDREN ARE THE REAL VICTIMS IN TODAY'S SOCIETY" (METRO, SEPT. 24) I'm very much dismayed that someone who appears to be quite intelligent, like letter-writer Donna Cohen, would fall for the Republican rhetoric of the supposed Obama "wealth distribution" theory. President Obama and the rest of us so-called liberals do not want your tax bracket to pay any more taxes then you should. If 30 percent of my paycheck (which I suspect is a lot smaller than yours) goes to taxes that build the roads you drive on and pays for the firemen, police, etc., that you depend on, then don't you think that in all fairness and patriotism you and Mitt Romney should be paying the same? We just want you to pay your fair share.

BARBARA MILUSKI, VIA E-MAIL

Donna Cohen whines about the percentage of overall taxes paid by the top 5 percent of wage earners without noting that those in the top 5 percent are paid 21.3 percent of American income and own an even larger percentage of its wealth, a percentage that continues to grow, while the share of income earned by the middle 60 percent of wage earners is declining (source: the Congressional Research Service). As Paul Krugman, a Nobel prize winner in Economics, put it, "To point out the obvious, the rich are paying more taxes because they're much richer than they used to be."

GREGORY S. HILL, RICHBORO, PA.

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Horoscope

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** If you make it obvious to your associate that the good things you want for yourself you want for him or her as well, you'll be more successful.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** A positive event will give you a new perspective on a situation that you have thus far viewed negatively. You'll now be able to see opportunities.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** You've been doing things the same old way and it hasn't been working. Your present conundrums call for fresh, innovative thinking.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Advice from a friend, albeit it well-intentioned, will not be on par with your own thinking when it comes to matters that pertain to your reputation or material success.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** An elusive and hard-to-access person whom you've been trying to contact regarding an important matter is likely to be available. Try again to open up a valuable line of communication.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Things that you come up with on your own are not likely to be as rewarding as something that has been arranged for you by another. Stick with your best option.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** A couple of friends of yours who aren't getting along with one another might use you as their intermediary. Don't take sides or pick a favorite.

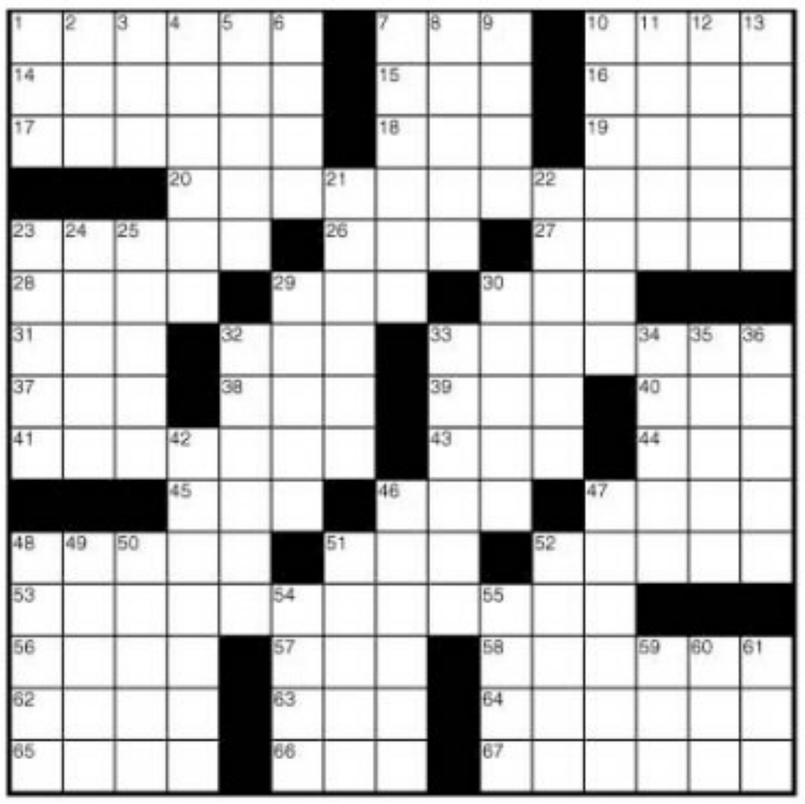
♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** For the first time, your perseverance and fortitude will begin paying off regarding an endeavor that you've been working hard on. A friend will get it rolling with some nice comments.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** If you are feeling luckier than usual, it's probably predicated upon some solid justification. However, even if it's not, positive thinking will go a long way toward improving your chances.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** A project that you've been dedicating yourself to for some time will take a big turn for the better owing to favorable external factors. Capitalize on these prevailing circumstances.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** You could be exceptionally lucky in partnership arrangements for both social and commercial purposes. This will be especially true when your ally is someone of the opposite gender.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Tried, true and traditional tactics are the ones that will bring you the kind of results you'll want in your financial affairs. Any departure from these proven procedures will be less effective. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**



Across
1 Craving
7 Tavern fare
10 Georgetown hoopster
14 Make bubbly
15 Kind of shelter
16 Receptive
17 Captivate
18 Hotfoot it
19 Clipper ship feature
20 Trunk contents (2 wds.)
23 Clay-target sport
26 Gary's st.
27 Finicky
28 Young horse
29 Double helix
30 Atlas Mtns. locale
31 Equip
32 Solstice mo.
33 Classy
37 Jamie — Curtis
38 Luau strummer
39 Rapper Tone —
40 Garden-pond fish
41 Close associate
43 However
44 Bartender's rocks
45 Hwys.
46 Not prepaid
47 Galaxy unit
48 Rock 'n' roll classic
51 Shooting marble
52 Circus jugglers
53 "Gimme a break!" (3 wds.)
56 Cat's-paw
57 911 responder
58 — out (ate too much)
62 Latin I verb
63 Tarzan's nanny
64 Small pleasures
65 Tree house?
66 Sea, to Cousteau
67 Inflexible

Down
1 — kwon do
2 Pullet
3 S&L offering
4 Airplane engine
5 Portly
6 School period
7 Parthenon goddess
8 Clan leader
9 Business VIP
10 Felt hat
11 Iridescent gems
12 Affirmatives
13 Restive
21 Lobster part
22 Influence
23 Resell tickets
24 Divided nation
25 Rice or Gantry
29 Fakes out
30 Meant to be heard
32 "Crocodile —"
33 Plumbing joints
34 Japanese dog
35 Better than lite (hyph.)
36 Wedding-cake layers
42 Short verse
46 Wheel on a swivel
47 "If I Had a Hammer" singer
48 A number of times
49 Relaxed, so to speak
50 Slag
51 Arizona State locale
52 Avoid, as an issue
54 Pair of mules
55 Living qtrs.
59 Moo goo — pan
60 And so forth
61 Summer hrs.

		1	8	6	7	9		
					1		4	5
6				2				
7	8	9				5		
3								4
		4				2	8	3
				7				9
4	1		2					
		7	5	8	4	1		

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

1	7	5		2				4
		3	9	4				6
		6			3			1
							9	
	6		1		2		4	
	5							
2			6			4		
5				3	8	1		
6				5		3	8	2

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

B	R	A	S	H	■	L	H	A	S	A	■	L	O	P
A	U	D	I	O	■	E	U	R	O	S	■	I	L	E
S	T	A	L	L	■	A	N	G	U	S	■	T	S	E
■	■	■	L	I	N	G	O	■	U	S	H	E	R	■
W	E	A	P	O	N	S	■	G	R	E	E	N	S	■
A	L	L	O	W	S	■	S	H	E	E	T	■	■	■
D	A	I	S	■	T	R	I	A	L	■	F	E	T	E
E	T	A	S	■	■	Y	O	W	■	■	O	V	A	L
D	E	S	I	■	C	A	U	S	E	■	R	I	L	L
■	■	■	B	R	O	N	X	■	B	O	T	T	L	E
S	L	A	L	O	M	■	■	S	A	S	H	A	Y	S
H	A	R	E	M	■	C	L	A	Y	S	■	■	■	■
O	T	T	■	A	G	A	I	N	■	I	V	I	E	S
O	H	S	■	N	U	K	E	D	■	F	I	R	M	A
K	E	Y	■	O	M	E	N	S	■	Y	E	A	S	T

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Opinion

ANGELO CATALDI
THE VOICE OF THE PHILLY SPORTS FAN

ANDY REID SHOULD GET RÉSUMÉ READY

Armed with an idiotic game plan in Arizona, Andy Reid's days in Philadelphia might be numbered. The Eagles coach has two weeks — against two big opponents — to get his tired act together.

▶ Fitzgerald torched the Birds for 114 yards.

GETTY IMAGES

There is no rational explanation for Reid's game plan against Arizona. No sane football mind would devise a strategy calling for the best receiver in football, Larry Fitzgerald, to run free all day. And only a blithering fool would expose Mike Vick to wave after wave of pass-rushers behind a porous offensive line.

Yet, in this pivotal season for the Eagles coach, that's precisely what he tried against a Cardinals team that coasted to a 27-6 win. In the course of this debacle, the Eagles also called a timeout between the first and second quarters, and lost track of downs during an offensive possession.

Quoted

Has Andy Reid's love of the forward pass doomed this team and his future here?

"I did a terrible job," Reid said after the game. No one disputed his claim.

In fact, Reid's performance was so hideous that it raised questions about everything associated with Reid. Has his love for the forward pass doomed this team and his future here? Does he — or anybody on his staff — have any clue how to coach defense? How did that lost soul win more games than any coach in Eagles history?

With the Giants and Steelers next on the schedule, Reid will either put the Arizona nightmare behind him quickly, or he will need to make plans for a change of venue at the end of the season. Reid cannot survive many more 27-6 drubbings, not after owner Jeff Lurie said another 8-8 record will seal the coach's fate.

The really mystifying part of Sunday's disaster is that the coach appeared to pre-ordain his own failure with a game plan that defied logic. For example, with no special attention from the Eagles' defense, Fitzgerald converted all nine passes he was thrown, for 114 yards and a demoralizing early touchdown.

After the game, the new secondary coach, Todd Bowles, said he had convinced Reid and defensive coordinator Juan Castillo that there was no need to place any extra emphasis on covering Fitzgerald. Those wondering if Reid or Castillo know anything about defense can add Bowles to that list, too.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Reid's game plan set Vick up for failure.

Even worse was the decision to run LeSean McCoy only four times in the first half, despite the fact the Eagles were using inexperienced Dallas Reynolds at center and human turnstile Demetress Bell at left tackle. Bell managed to do the impossible. He made fans pine for King Dunlap.

Because of this idiotic game plan, Vick absorbed 20 hits by the Arizona defense, many in the first half while the Birds were falling behind 24-0. After the game, the new, improved Reid sounded just like the old one.

"We probably could have run the ball a little more," he said.

For Reid, the insanity must end right now, this minute. If he doesn't do a better job next week and beyond, he'll need to find a better job real soon.

*— **Angelo Cataldi** is the host of 94 WIP's Morning Show, which airs weekdays 5:30-10 a.m.*

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Opinion

Stop bashing Ryan Howard

Chase Utley and Ryan Howard have been the catalysts for the most successful run in Phillies history, and yet they are never seen as a tandem. Utley always gets the benefit of the doubt. Howard often gets the shaft.

Why?

By any realistic analysis, Howard is the more important player, a slugger who has been one of the top three run producers in baseball throughout the Phillies' reign. Utley has been solid when healthy, but also a disappointment in recent years. Howard also is a generous player, always ready with a cheery remark and a wink of the eye. Utley is a bore.

Last Wednesday night, Utley walked with two outs in the ninth inning and the Phillies trailing, 2-1, in New York. He had to be told to go to first by home-plate umpire Bob Davidson because the usually savvy second baseman had lost track of the count. Howard then won the game with a home run. The next morning, more fans called my radio show to praise Utley's at-bat than Howard's homer. Huh?

GETTY IMAGES

▶ It's time Phillies fans started appreciating one of the greatest sluggers in franchise history.

I know what you're thinking, and it's not true. This is not a racial issue. The most beloved player on the Phils is Jimmy Rollins, and this adulation includes many of the Howard bashers. No, the real reason is a deep prejudice against strikeouts.

Howard has struck out once every three at-bats in his career. He has killed a lot of threats with helpless swings, not to mention a season in 2010 when he ended it with the bat on his shoulder. Utley fails almost as often, but always with a sneer on his face and dirt on his uniform. Philadelphia hates strikeouts, loves dirty uniforms.

But our harsh treatment of one of the greatest sluggers in Phillies history is not right. The fans booing Ryan Howard are really the ones striking out.

ANGELO CATALDI

Idle thoughts from Cataldi

1 Doc's best years behind him. Roy Halladay's status as an ace pitcher is officially in doubt. At 35, he is finally admitting to some shoulder "issues" that might explain his 4.40 ERA and reduced velocity. If he cannot return to form in 2013, this depressing season will the first of many for the Phils. Bet on it.

2 You blew it. Charlie Manuel used Jonathan Papelbon with a four-run lead Friday night but wouldn't bring the closer in for a four-out save in Houston a week earlier. Someday, the adoring media will finally acknowledge that Manuel blew this season. And last season, too.

3 Cheating with integrity? Melky Cabrera took himself out of the National League batting race last week after getting caught earlier in the season taking steroids, and somehow this gesture was hailed as an act of great sportsmanship. Please. The guy cheated. His .346 batting average was bogus. He deserved nothing.

4 Respect and admiration. One of the most important people in the history of the NFL died last week, the gifted and inspiring Steve Sabol of NFL Films. Sabol was a masterful storyteller who embraced both the violence and beauty of the game. Football fans of all ages owe a deep debt of gratitude to this amazing man.

ANGELO CATALDI

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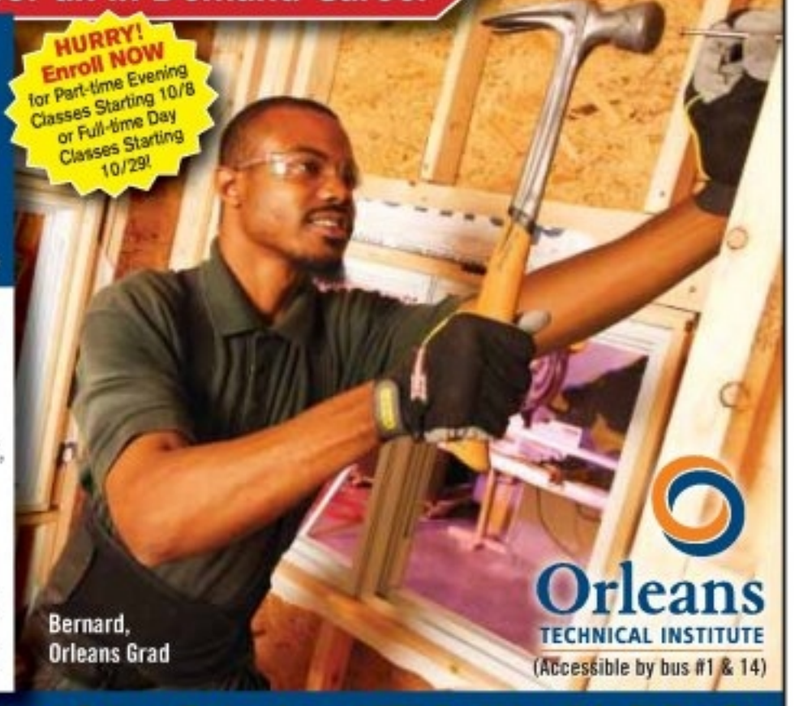

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▶ Tony DiLeo has done it all for the Sixers' organization, including coaching them in 2009. Now he is the team's new GM.

Sixers dropped ball on GM search

The new-look Sixers have promoted an old face. After an embarrassing three-month search, Tony DiLeo is the new GM. You probably don't remember the name. He was the dullest coach in Sixers history three years ago, and has been a personnel guy in the organization for 23 non-descript seasons.

DiLeo's selection is the latest move in a bizarre summer by our basketball team. It is now entirely safe to say that Andrew Bynum may not be the savior of the team, but he definitely is the savior of the off-season. Kwame Brown and Tony DiLeo aren't exactly a formula for raised expectations and hot ticket sales.

The Sixers, under quiet owner Joshua Harris and loud CEO Adam Aron, are fan-friendly, but also prone to gaffes that suggest inexperience — if not outright incompetence. And the best example of their bumbling is this GM search.

At least three higher-profile candidates with better winning pedigrees than DiLeo rejected the job before the longtime house man got the consolation prize.

DiLeo is the wrong choice, and not just because he has not dazzled as a procurer of talent. He is the wrong choice because, at a time when the Sixers are trying desperately not to be ignored, they picked a GM who wants to be.

In a city with sports behemoths like the Eagles and Phillies, the Sixers needed somebody with big ideas and a big personality to command the spotlight.

Instead, they got a wallflower named Tony DiLeo.

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Reid evaluating Vick; let the Foles watch commence

Eagles coach sticking with No. 7 'right now' Won't give rookie extra reps at practice Need to limit turnovers, amount of hits on quarterback

They say the backup quarterback is the most popular guy in town. After a loss, that increases tenfold.

No one's blaming the Eagles' disappointing 26-7 defeat at Arizona entirely on Mike Vick. He was under duress all afternoon — getting sacked five times and knocked down 20 more — but the quarterback has struggled.

Vick has been solely responsible for nine of the team's 12 turnovers this season. So, one day after the debacle in Arizona, it was fair to ask coach Andy Reid if he'd consider putting backup Nick Foles in if Vick can't eliminate the turnovers.

Quoted

"I'll tell you, he's getting hit way too much. That's what I can tell you. At this point, it's way too much, so that part's got to end. We've got to limit that."
REID

"Right now we're with Michael, and that's what we're doing. We'll evaluate as we go," the coach said.

Read that again. It's not exactly a ringing endorsement. However, Reid dismissed the notion that Foles would see more snaps at practice this week. Of course, turnovers aren't the only issue.

The Eagles' offensive line seemed to struggle without King Dunlap and Jason Kelce. And sometimes it looked as if Vick might be holding onto the ball too long, maybe not firing rapidly enough in Reid's West Coast offense.

"Everybody's got a little piece of this," Reid said. "To say that there's not a play here or there that he might hold the ball too long, I can't tell you 'no' on that, and he'd be the first to tell you. That's not the case every time he throws or gets hit."

The one thing everyone can agree on is that Vick can't keep absorbing all these hits. There is no way he'll survive a 16-game schedule if he keeps getting pummeled every time he drops back.

"I'll tell you, he's getting hit way too much," Reid said. "That's what I can tell you. At this point, it's way too much, so that part's got to end. We've got to limit that."

MIKE GREGER
mgreger@metro.us

▶ Foles will be the toast of sports-talk radio this week.

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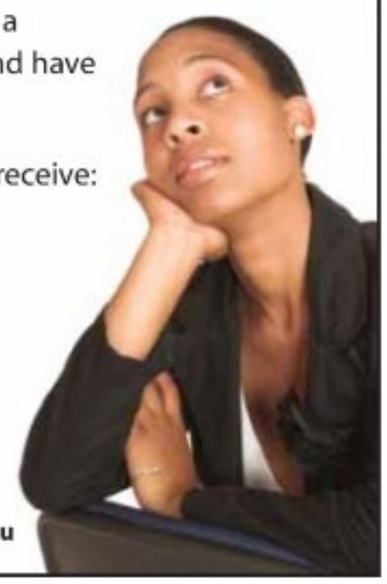

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